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My (Other) Love

Proof that Inc. 500 CEOs -- five of them, anyway -- have a life outside the office.

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The Bush Pilot

Douglas Kahn
Ahura Scientific

Douglas Kahn calls piloting a "spiritual experience." He likes to spend his summer vacations bush flying -- taking off and landing in the wilderness -- in remote areas of northern Maine. "There are more moose per square mile than there are people," he says.

His ride: A modified 1946 Piper Cub. It runs on regular gasoline.

Time in the air: About 150 flight hours a year

On bush flying: "It's the entrepreneurial form of aviation," he says. "It's freeform and much more exciting. If I'm going to land in a pond, I have to decide if it's safe. There's no book telling you the length of the runway. There's no clearance for takeoff. There's a higher risk and a higher return."

Aboard the plane: A medical kit, a tool kit, and survival gear

Flying for charity: Kahn is a member of Angel Flight, a nonprofit that connects volunteer pilots with people who have serious medical conditions and live far from treatment. He volunteers for two or three missions a year, depending on his schedule.

The Opera Singer

Genevieve Thiers
Sittercity

Three years after starting her business, Genevieve Thiers and a few friends founded OperaModa, a Chicago opera company. OperaModa, which puts on about three shows a year, performs American operas.

Favorite role: Dorine, the maid in *Tartuffe*

Time involved: Two to three hours a week for voice lessons; up to eight hours a day for rehearsals as a show draws near

Voice: She's a light lyric soprano, which means her voice can fill a 1,000- to 2,000-seat house -- without a microphone, of course.

Difficulty: "People look at my business and say, 'That must be so hard.' But it's easy compared with the life of an opera singer. I've been at an audition where they weighed me on a scale."

The Cattleman

J.F. Kassler

LEVEL5

Joe Kassler grew up in the country and always dreamed of becoming a rancher. Now two full-time workers help him raise more than 500 cattle on his ranch, The Oaks Farms, in Newnan, Georgia.

Cattle: Brangus, a mix of Brahman and Angus. "It's a sensational breed," says Kassler. "They do well with high temperatures and pestilence."

Names: Some bulls are named after Texas counties and NFL players.

Best bull: Csonka, named after NFL Hall of Famer Larry Csonka

Technology: Using an ultrasound device, Kassler can check the size of the steaks an animal will produce. "We can tell whether a bull will produce a 13- or 14-square-inch rib eye," he says. Ranchers use hydraulic chutes to restrain the cattle for ultrasounds.

Exports: The ranch sells and ships frozen cow embryos and bull semen to breeders in South America, New Zealand, Australia, and Mexico.

The Black Belt

Joel Jorgenson

Packet Digital

Five years ago, Joel Jorgenson took his sons to taekwon do classes and decided he wanted to learn, too. He now spars regularly at his gym in Fargo, North Dakota.

Skill level: Second-degree black belt. Earning it required completing 81 moves, plus board breaks using three types of kicks.

Worst injury: Cracked ribs after a roundhouse kick from his sparring partner. "I was sure he was faking," says Jorgenson. "I jumped into it. That turned out to be a wrong move on my part."

Weapons: He's trained to use a bo staff, a baton, and nunchaku. He has weapons in his office and sometimes demonstrates moves for employees.

Tournaments: Jorgenson, who is 43, often competes against high schoolers. "They are flexible and tough to catch," he says. "I joke that I'm going to be waiting for them in the parking lot."

The Songwriter

Tim Miller

Intelligent Logistics

A self-taught musician, Tim Miller spends his free time writing and recording songs in his home studio in Austin.

But he keeps his singing to a minimum. "I don't like the sound of my voice," he says.

Songs: About 100

Instruments: Guitar, accordion, bass, piano, mandolin

Recurring theme: The road. "My musician buddies give me a hard time, because every song I write has to do with the road. I hate to drive, but there's a freedom in it."

Influences: Gospel music and bands such as the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, and the Band. Miller wrote a song about the Band's drummer, Levon Helm.

Lyrics: "I don't wanna be rich. I wanna be Levon Helm....'Cause fame is fleeting, but not a damn good song. And, brother, when you ain't got nothing, well, you ain't got nothing wrong."

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